DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 144 183 EA 009 876

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TITLE Massachusetts Educational Innovators in Action: "The Process for the Product."
INSTITUTION Merrimack Education Center, Chelmsford, Mass.
PUB DATE Sep 76
NOTE 59p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrative Personnel; Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Role; *Demonstration Projects; *Diffusion; *Educational Innovation; Elementary Secondary Education; Federal Programs; *Program Administration; Program Evaluation; State Surveys
IDENTIFIERS *Elementary Secondary Education Act Title III; Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

This report describes a study of one-year educational innovation projects funded under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. Focus of the study was not on the content of the projects but on how they were conducted, with particular emphasis on the role of the project directors. Data for the study were gathered through lengthy personal interviews with the directors of 32 of the 33 Title III projects funded in Massachusetts during 1975-76. Separate sections of the report discuss the project director's role, the process of building and maintaining relationships with key people and groups, the projects as problem-solving models, the adequacy of project funding under Title III, the process of stabilizing innovative projects, the process of disseminating innovative projects, and the process of evaluating innovative projects. (JG)

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MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL INNOVATORS IN ACTION:

"THE PROCESS FOR THE PRODUCT"

RONALD G. HAVELOCK

Supported by the Staff of the Merrimack Education Center

September 1976

EA 009 876

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MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL INNOVATORS IN ACTION: THE PROCESS FOR THE PRODUCT

Ronald G. Havelock
Supported by the Staff of the
Merrimack Education Center

PREFACE

1975-76 was the last year for Innovation Projects under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. New legislation replaced it but as the old law terminated, State Departments of Education were forced to dole out funds for just one year of effort. What could be accomplished in one year? After several years of three-year projects, this was quite a challenge. For the evaluators, statewide, there was also a challenge, not so much to see what could be done, because there would be few visible results within the year, but to see how it was done. How did project directors take hold of these projects and steer them towards what they thought would be a worthwhile end? We tried to find out through long structured interviews with each of the directors of those projects which had won the competition for the final year of funds.

The State awarded thirty-three projects in the final year of Title III. We got to talk to thirty-two of them as they were completing their work in the eighth and ninth month of a twelve-month cycle. We asked them to describe their projects, to explain what they hoped would result from them in outcomes for teachers, students, the community, and others; but we were most concerned about how they did it, how they conceived it in the first place, how they planned, how they perceived their own roles, how they developed relationships with various people and groups who would be important for success, how they acquired resources, how they solved problems, how they evaluated what they were doing, and how they made sure that their efforts would last and would spread to others.

Each interview took about two hours, some less, some a lot more. We felt that in most of them we really got to know the people who were directing this work and they got to know us. In fact, they could have gone longer and it often seemed that we had both learned a great deal; many expressed their appreciation for such an opportunity to take a long reflective look at what happened and especially how it happened.

The interviews were partly very open, partly structured (see the sample schedule included in the appendix). Thus, they gave us an opportunity both to appreciate the uniqueness of each and at the same time to compare some aspects across projects. On content, there is little we can say except that the variety is mind-boggling as well as exciting. But there are similarities and these become obvious when we look at the process. This is what we will try to convey to the reader in the following pages.

We focused our study on the role and experience of the project director partly because of our own time and budgetary constraints. However, we reasoned that directors typically play the most vital role in innovation projects. There is one responsible person; insiders and outsiders tend to look to this person for information, reassurances and guidance regarding most aspects of a project from start to finish. For better or for worse (we think probably for better) the project director, therefore, symbolized and personified the project as a whole.

Given this fact, a second general finding is that all projects are engaged in a problem-solving effort for the educational community. In other words, there are some needs to which attention has been drawn, and an effort is made to acquire resources, ideas, facts, and solutions relevant to these needs and to apply these resources to the needs with expectations of positive results.

A third conclusion is that this problem-solving doesn't occur in one fixed sequence; rather, there is a pattern which repeats itself, sometimes many times before a project is completed. In fact, the more capacity a project has for recycling, up-to-a-point, the stronger the project, because there is more responsiveness to changing needs, changing resources, and changing perceptions of what is possible. All projects go through at least one problem-solving cycle just in the process of preparing a proposal. Very often, at State insistence, this proposal is written up a second time requiring a second year cycle before final funding is made available. After funding has terminated, there are also probably many cycles but we obviously did not have a chance to look at them.

A fourth conclusion of this study is regarding the tasks of the director himself (herself). There are at least four principal functions which must be performed: the manager function, the facilitator-coordinator, the communicator, and the intellectual leader or creator (e.g., proposal and report writers). Almost all directors assumed at least two of these functions; many assumed all four. We expected that there would be considerable role strain due to both the heavy load of work and complexity of skills implied by these functions and by the marginality and ambiguity associated with all new roles which don't fit existing and traditional stereotypes. On the surface, however, there was not must evidence of such role strain or at least of any undue suffering resulting from it.

Of all his/her responsibilities probably the most crucial is the development and maintenance of strong positive relationships between the project and the rest of the system, most especially the superintendent and the school board. Most project directors well appreciated this point but some failed to inspire a sense of commitment, belonging, and ownership of the project in these significant areas.

While almost all recognized their projects as a form of school district problem-solving, very few went very far in assessing and analyzing district needs before advocating their "solutions," and none had a satisfactory procedure for reassessing needs on a continuing basis.

Projects varied greatly in their willingness and ability to use knowledge and technical resources from various sources. There was a tendency to think that what was needed for the project was either already in hand or readily obtainable from a particular source. Hence, most projects did not engage in a serious search effort and did not tap a very wide range of leads into the resource universe of American education.

A crucial question for most projects was survival beyond the one year funding period. It was clear that a very wide range of options exists for continuation both financial and other. Most projects sought continuation through the same Federal program and most also sought increases and commitments from their local district. The results were mixed. Continued local support depended on many factors, some of which were entirely outside the control of the project director. However, relationship to the community, to the board, to the superintendent and others was a crucial matter over which he/she usually did have some control.

Projects also used a tremendous variety of media to tell their story both to their own district and to outsiders. Personal, group, print, and electronic media strategies were used, usually in combination. Local newspapers are probably the most common, most accessible medium for dissemination and sometimes assisted in building political support for the project.

Finally, it is very difficult to make a blanket judgment about the "success" of the program, partly because evaluation efforts are generally feeble and too narrowly focused to give a full and fair picture of all the bad or the good things that actually happened and resulted. Our inclination is to believe that the over-all effort was overwhelmingly positive and very much worthwhile.

I. *THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE AND ROLE PERCEPT*

An important focus of this evaluation project was the role of the project director. Training activities were undertaken on the assumption that the role was often ill-defined and misunderstood by both role occupants and the relevant others with whom the project director had to relate.

One way to conceive the role was as another type of administrator within the system or as another kind of teacher or another kind of counselor. These more traditional, more fully accepted, and more fully understood roles are likely to serve as models or reference points for any new, emergent, or fuzzy roles that the system now has to deal with. Furthermore, for many of our project directors, these were the roles from which they, themselves, had only recently emerged, and perhaps, the roles to which they could or would return when the project was over for whatever reason.

To explore the areas of role functions and role self-perceptions, two questions were asked in the interviews. The first was simply: "How would you define your role in the project?" The second was a listing of eleven role functions which was handed to the director with the question: "What percentage of your time is spent on the following roles?" Respondents were reminded that the total might add up to more than one hundred percent since the roles were overlapping. They were also urged to provide fuller explanations of what work they performed under each of the headings. To further check on the importance of the role in the total work space of the person, we asked what percentage of time was devoted to project duties altogether. In response to this last question, we found the following pattern:

TABLE 1

TIME DEVOTED TO PROJECT

Time Devoted to Project	Number
100%	10
90%	1
80%	1
75%	2
60%	2
50%	6
40%	2
35%	3
30%	2
20%	1
No codable response	2

Thus, roughly one-third are full-time and the other two-thirds cluster around fifty percent. In any case, it is evident that the project director role is a serious part of the work life of all the people who were interviewed. Furthermore, for many if not most it was a dominating and even all-consuming activity which swallowed up much more time than was actually budgeted.

Moving now to the kinds of activities which were mentioned as a part of the role, it is clear that project directors are called upon to perform a very large array of tasks. It will be convenient for clarity of presentation to group the findings into five clusters and to discuss the open-ended question and the eleven function list together. The five patterns which seem to emerge from the analysis are as follows:

A. The manager
B. The facilitator
C. The communicator
D. The creator
E. The "do-all"

A. *The Manager*

The largest category involved duties which traditionally are associated with managing or directing something, including making the key decisions and telling people what to do; in short, the "boss". There were a total of forty-seven mentions of activity which seemed to fit this category. Some of these corresponded exactly with the list which we later provided of eleven functions. For these specified functions in the tables below we will also provide the average percentage of time which project directors devote to the function.

TABLE 2

MANAGER ROLE DIMENSIONS

Average Percentage of Time	Function	Spontaneous Mentions
	Director	8
	Budget-books-bills	7
37%	*Manager*	5
	Administrator	5
	Planning	5
	Staff recruitment	5
	Purchasing-Ordering materials	3
20%	*Key Decision Maker*	1

Other functions which received mention and seemed to fit roughly into this category were: "riding herd on consultants", "clear bureaucracy", "trouble shooter", "logistical problems", and "safety".

Most project directors make it very clear that they feel responsible for the project fiscally and in all other ways. In a few cases, this is seen as a burden which was cast upon them by an unkind fate or by mismanagement and shirking of responsibility further up the line, but more often it is or becomes a welcome challenge and a chance to move up and out of traditional school roles.

B. *The Facilitator*

Second in importance is the role of "facilitator", a term which we use to cover the various activities related to bringing people together and helping them to do whatever it is that they are to do. For some, this role was paramount and precluded functioning as the decision-maker or as the one who directs others. However, for the majority the "manager" and the "facilitator" roles either overlapped or had to be performed at different stages of the project. The following table tells part of the story.

TABLE 3

FACILITATOR ROLE DIMENSIONS

Average Percentage of Time	Function	Spontaneous Mentions
	Coordinator	10
	Scheduling	4
17%	*Consultant*	3
	Facilitator	2
	Problem Solver	2
12%	*Catalyst*	1

Other functions which seemed to fit this category were: "guiding and paving the way", "orchestrating ideas", "generating a team", "chairperson to keep things together", "working behind the scenes to smooth things", "assist in defining the problem", "working with teachers and students", and "forcing people to deal with issues". Altogether, there were 33 spontaneous mentions of functions which fitted this category.

C. *The Communicator*

Another very important set of responsibilities related in one way or another to communication: firstly, within the project; secondly, between the project and the system; thirdly, between the project and the community; and finally, in some cases, between the project and a wider community of interest among educators in other school districts across the state and beyond the state.

It also appears that the communicator role becomes more salient and changes as the project progresses through the year. As the next table illustrates, the dimensions of this role are potentially vast and extremely complex, requiring a great variety of skills in using very different media and messages to best advantage and in orchestration.

TABLE 4

COMMUNICATOR ROLE DIMENSIONS

Average Percentage of Time	Function	Spontaneous Mentions
11%	*Disseminator*	6
	Public Relations/ publicity	6
12%	*Resource Linker*	3
	Liaison	3
	Newspaper articles/press releases	2
	Links to state	2

Other activity descriptions which seemed to fit this category were: "communicator", "salesman", "linking project inside and outside the system", "brochure development", "creating audio-visual presentations on the project", "running workshops", "newsletter" and "keeping the staff informed". Communicating activities were perhaps even more important than these figures indicate, but we will reserve much of that discussion for the part of the report which deals with dissemination as such. Altogether, there were thirty-six spontaneous mentions of role activity in this category in response to the open-ended question on role description, second only to the "manager" category.

D. The Creator

It was obvious from many of the interviews that the project director viewed him-or-herself as the prime source of ideas for the project and the one to whom others would look for guidance and instruction as to what it was all about. There were eleven spontaneous mentions which seemed to suggest

this in one way or another. For example, four stated that they were teachers or trainers of teachers in the basic substance of the project, and this item was rated as receiving an average of 16% of the director's time. Two indicated that they were the "solution providers" and this category on the list was rated at 12% on the average by all project directors. Other spontaneous mentions which seemed to fit are: "instigator", "trainer-of-trainers", "conscience", "visionary", and "guiding teachers to the solution".

More compelling evidence for the importance of this role comes from the fact that about half the project directors wrote the proposals for their projects, many practically alone. Even more are likely to have been involved in writing the proposals for next year's follow-on activities. These facts should be put together with other facts about the perception of the project as "innovative". Nearly half of those interviewed saw the project as "a very new and unique concept as far as I know" (14 of the 30 from whom responses to this question were obtained). The other half (15 out of 30) saw the project as "new at least as far as my region or district is concerned". No one stated that his/her project was not innovative and only one said that "it was only new as far as the particular client group was concerned". Thus, it is clear that project directors are heavily involved in creating their projects and see their projects as creative. This may partly explain the very high sense of involvement, responsibility, commitment to success, and commitment to continuation that typify their attitudes.

E. *Other Roles*

In addition to the salient role dimensions suggested above, there were other functions which received significant mention and these are identified in the next table.

TABLE 5

OTHER DIMENSIONS OF THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE

Average Percentage of Time	Function	Spontaneous Mention
	Internal evaluator	4
	Look for/solicit funds	4
	Develop materials/modules	4
11%	*Solution adapter*	1
11%	*Solution implementor*	0
7%	*Researcher*	1

Other unclassifiable responses were: "look for new avenues" and "production".

F. *The "Do-All"*

It would be misleading to say that we found four distinct "types" in our analysis of roles. In fact, almost all project directors had duties which covered several sets of functions spreading across these types. A few were so bold as to suggest that they did everything, leaving us to wonder whether the old fashioned ideas of division of labor and delegation of authority had been discarded altogether. In response to the open-ended question: "How would you define your role?" we received an average of 3.9 separate functions per respondent. In response to the more closed-ended list of eleven functions, the average respondent checked 6.4 functions as involving him or her at least 5% of the time. Hence, it is clear that most project directors are called upon to play diverse roles and more of them end up as "do-alls" than are willing to admit it.

Implications of Role Analysis

Given the breadth, complexity, and sheer demand of this role, we might ask two questions: first, is it possible for anyone to do it? and secondly, if

it is, what sort of person is required? From our interviews, we have the strong impression that it is very possible. In fact, many people seem to approach the assignment with zest and flair, even when the assignment is thrust upon them by others and not sought by deliberate choice. The second question is more difficult to answer. In terms of background, sex, age, or other obvious measures of that sort, we discern no pattern whatever. Many project directors are former teachers; many are former administrators at various levels; some are former guidance counselors; a few are new professionals fresh out of university; two or three are college professors doing this on the side or taking time out. In sum, it is very clear that Title III creates opportunities for new people to do things they have never done before, to broaden their skill mix, and to gain a great variety of new experiences relevant in various ways to schools.

On the other hand, it is no bed of roses. There are severe role strains to be endured, and while most end up doing very well, there are many errors made along the way which result from lack of skills, lack of training, or a lack of realization until too late that a certain kind of activity was required which had not been a part of the director's "bag of tricks" heretofore. "Title III Project Director" is not a role which has any basis in the traditions of education and it is not well understood or even well appreciated by most educators, even those who administer Title III at the federal and state level. The problems which loom the largest can probably be summarized best by the two words: "ambiguity" and "overload".

Ambiguity:

It is rarely clear to a person entering this role what will be required in terms of activities and responsibilties. There are few clearly defined limits and few if any sources one can go to to get even suggestions of the best way to define those limits for oneself; hence, there are great ambiguities with respect to the task, itself. Secondly, there are ambiguities with

respect to others, especially established roles in the system such as "principal" and "teacher". These ambiguities often lead to discomfort and sometimes open conflict with others in these more traditional and more established roles. Finally, there is usually an ambiguity with regard to status and power within the system. Most project directors appear to have more freedom and more opportunity for self-definition of work space than traditional role holders, but this is almost always bought at the price of security. Furthermore, it is often under threat by others who feel that their own power or status is being threatened. Often,those most threatened will also be in positions which are marginal to the system in one way or another.

Overload:

Our concern about overload derives more from logic than from the direct evidence of the interviews. Few complained specifically about overload in spite of the obvious bustle of their work lives. Then why raise the question? For three reasons: first of all, it is obvious that the variety of role demands will lead people to over-extend themselves, perhaps even without knowing it. Second, it is likely that many project directors put the best face on it when they are interviewed by an outsider; it is simply not kosher to admit failures and inadequacies to strangers, especially when they may have an influence on your future. Thirdly, we suspect that the "do-all" syndrome is ultimately unhealthy, not just because mistakes get made and jobs don't get done well, but also because not enough people get into the act that way and others aren't being trained to take on parts of the role when and if the project director drops out of sight for whatever reason.

There seems to be some evidence that the long interviews, coupled with the training sessions at which project directors could discuss and compare their roles had some sort of therapeutic effect, even though it came very late in the project year. Project directors have had few chances to see the role in perspective and to work on filling out or upgrading their skill repertoire. We feel that there is a need to expand and strengthen the special

culture of project directors through training experiences and through continuing opportunities to dialogue with each other and with experts on various aspects of project management.

II. BUILDING AND MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY PEOPLE AND GROUPS

It is evident that the success of a project at all stages depends upon the good will and, to some extent, the involvement of persons in various key positions in the district and sometimes beyond the district. Hence, one of the questions in our interview dealt directly with relationship issues. The question was put as follows:

> *"Have you been able to build relationships with people in key positions? (Those who authorize, unlock doors to funds, clients, etc.?)"*

Four follow-up questions sought more detail: "Who are they? What kind of effort was needed to acquire these relationships? How so you maintain them? and, Are there any current problems where relationships could be improved?"

In answer to the general question, we found a large majority of "yes" answers, even in one or two cases where further probes revealed very serious relationship failures. Twenty clearly claimed success in establishing key relationships and were able to present evidence of this. On the other hand, for five of the projects, there were significant failures which hampered the implementation of the projects in important ways; for the six other projects, it was difficult to determine whether or not key relationships had been established because of the oblique or incomplete nature of the response. On the other hand, a majority of projects cited instances of problems in relationships which occured at one point or another; seventeen cited problems; eleven claimed no problems; and the remaining four did not give a clear response which could be codable one way or the other.

A. *Key Relationships: What are they?*

Title III projects usually must fit into one of two basic social configurations, simply stated as the "district configuration" and the "multiple district configuration" (which might be regional or state-wide). The district configuration is by far the most common and is remarkably constant, regardless of the specific content of the project, the number of schools involved or the level. It is illustrated in the figure below. The left-hand side of the figure shows the key roles within the district, representing individuals, staff, or administrative hierarchies. Also represented are groups of people, organized or otherwise. Arrows represent the key relationships.

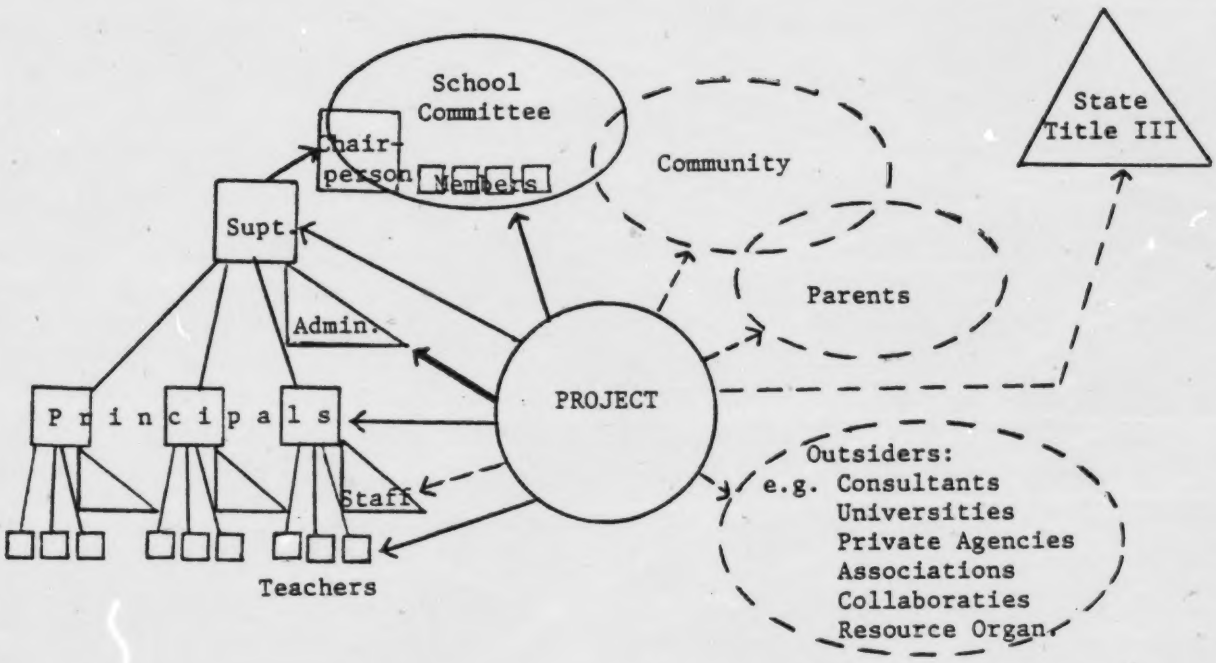

FIGURE 1: The District Configuration

The most constant elements in this configuration are probably the relationship between the project and the superintendent and the interconnected relationship of the superintendent to his school committee and its chairperson. Decision-making power in the system is very heavily concentrated at these two points, making their good will and support absolutely essential, especially for long-term continuance.

The multiple district configuration is often (but not necessarily) considerably more complicated and certainly more variable. Thus, the diagram below must be viewed much more tentatively. Furthermore, because our data is very limited, the arrows are drawn more-or-less speculatively.

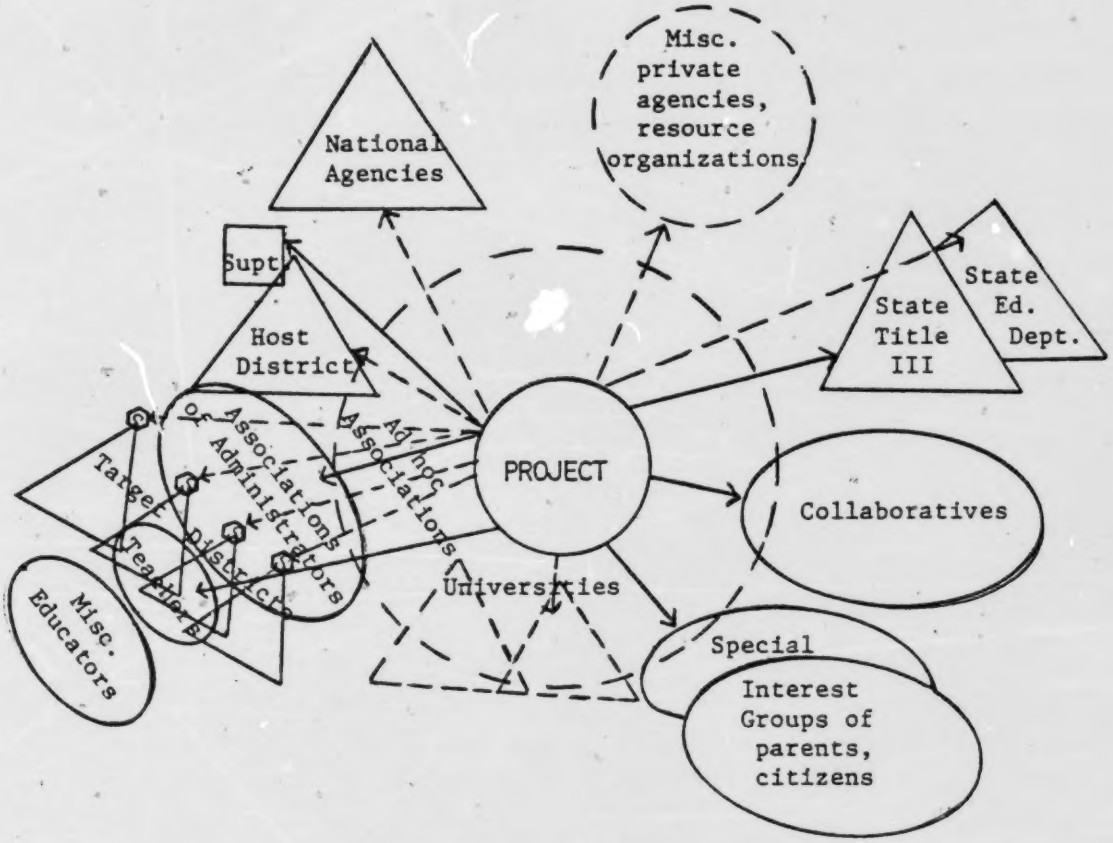

FIGURE 2: The Multiple District Configuration

As Figure 2 suggests, it is vastly more important for multiple district projects to build good relationships with associations of educators and concerned citizens which cut across district lines. There will still be important relationships to maintain within districts, of course, but these will be necessarily more limited with the possible exception of the "host" district, if there is one: i.e., the district which provides a base for the staff and for various activities and services. This may well be the district in which the project originated in a previous year. Because of the nebulous character of many of the associations to which the project must relate, it may actually find itself in the business of creating an ad hoc organization or association of its own to serve as a membership focus for those who would like to be involved. Indeed, many of the educational collaboratives which are now thriving within the State of Massachusetts have such an origin.

Given the above distinction between project types, who do we find identified by the project directors themselves as the key people? The following table summarizes the findings.

TABLE 6

HOW PROJECTS RELATE TO KEY PEOPLE

Key Role/Group	Relationship Solid	Relationship Problematic	Total
Superintendent	9	3	12
Principal(s)	12	2	14
School Committee	9	2	11
Admin. Staff (e.g. pupil personnel, spec. ed. dir., dep. sup., curr. directors)	18	2	20
Teachers* (inc. dept. heads)	10	3	13
State Title III Staff	3	1	4
Parent Groups* (advisory)	3	0	3
Students*	(1)	(1)	(2)

In addition to the above, two projects noted relations to university people, in one case adequate, in the other problematic. One project noted a very good relationship (interest, involvement) with the mayor of the city; another noted relations with selectmen. School psychologist, guidance personnel, and counselors were each mentioned once as solid relationships. In one case, there was difficulty relating adequately to the chief project consultant who had originally developed and written the proposal.

B. *Quality of Relationships*

In some cases, it seemed evident after a good deal of probing that a "good" relationship with a powerful person or group wasn't necessarily good for very much. For example, one director first claimed that relations with the superintendent were quite good, but later informed us that the superintendent had been unwilling to recommend continuation of the project to the school committee in the absence of continued state funding. This and other examples of a similar kind suggest that project directors sometimes take too much for granted. If there is an important gatekeeper whose strong endorsement is necessary, it may be a good idea to test the strength of the relationship and to indulge in intensive communication beyond the point at which formal endorsement has been secured.

C. *What were the Problems?*

We were able to identify six classes of problems connected to building relationships, and of these, at least five had to do directly or indirectly with power.

(1) Turfishness: in at least two instances, the project seemed to represent a threat to the authority or the "turf" of other people in the system: in one of these cases the project director had attempted to by-pass the authority of another administrative person, attempting to build a firm relationship with the superintendent;

when the latter stuck to the chain of command, the project came under mugh tighter control and surveillance by the unsympathetic intermediary. In the other case, a multiple district configuration, key relationships with university people failed because of inter-institutional suspicions and concern to maintain traditional prerogatives.

(2) Passivity: some important people simply chose to remain aloof from project activity by delegating excessively to others or by playing hard-to-get. Sometimes the lack of contact was deliberately manipulated by an intermediary. For example, it is common practice in some districts for the superintendent to block access to the school committee or to filter it excessively so that there is no real chance for the project to display its wares to the people who will make the decisions on its fate.

(3) Over-control: in one instance, the project director claimed that the essential goals of a project were completely thwarted by a conservative principal who "chairs everything and everybody". In another case, project staff found that they were being held "accountable" by an impossible number of petty bureaucrats.

(4) Low-power association: in one instance, the persons to whom the project related most closely had very little power to affect change in their own organizations. It is important for project directors to make a distinction between the people it is serving as clients, many of whom are necessarily and by definition in low-power positions, and those to whom it must relate for administrative and fiscal survival.

(5) Pre-occupation of key persons: in one case, the merits of a project could not be appreciated because the school committee was locked in a re-election struggle. In other cases, people were for various

reasons just too busy or overbooked to give the project the attention that it needed.

(6) Finally, there were a few instances of simple resistance to change. In two cases, department heads refused to concede that newer approaches were worth even minimal investments of staff time or attention. In another case, a superintendent was unwilling to take any risks on behalf of change after an incident of inappropriate behavior on a field trip early in the project.

This listing of problems should be placed in the perspective of all the projects in which no problems were reported and those in which problems were confronted and overcome with relative ease. The overall record seems remarkably good. Certainly there is little evidence that there is any massive resistance to educational innovation within the State of Massachusetts.

D. *How Are Relationships Built and Maintained?*

Because the interview did not permit the tracing of actions with respect to any one key person in any detail, we are not able to report as much as we would like to about how relationships developed over time and what types of strategies and tactics were employed. It is clear, however, that personal face-to-face contact has no substitute at the early stages. The most successful project directors seemed to be very forceful and bold in this regard, some of them meticulously making the rounds to every school in their district more than once: first to explain everything to the principal, later, with the principal's blessing, to the staff. Such a thorough personal approach seems to pay off. More passive approaches using brochures or letters or reports and memos did not seem to work well except as supplements to the more direct personal approach. If this is the case, it follows that project directors must make very shrewd judgments as to who the "key" people really are for their projects since it will not be possible to make effective personal contact with all the school personnel who are potentially relevant in the district. This is even more obviously true for the multiple district configurations.

E. Implications

Building relationships and maintaining them is perhaps the most critical aspect of the management of all innovative projects. Hence, it would appear obvious that project directors have some amount of training or orientation regarding relationship issues, problems, and strategies prior to entry on their mission. In fact, there are at least four entry situations: the first and easiest is the "old hand" in the familiar situation. A few of our respondents indicated that relationships were not a problem because they already had positions in the system which commanded power and respect and had known all the key people for years. The second entry situation is the person who has been with the system for some time in a relatively low status, usually teacher, sometimes guidance counselor, who now takes on a dramatically new role with greatly enhanced but ambiguous status; a third type is the newcomer who starts his/her experience in this district with this project even though he/she might have had some other educational role in the past. A last entry point is the outsider, i.e., the person whose home base and professional identity are really outside the district. For the last three entry positions, training and/or sophistication in relationship building are critical.

There are at least three areas in which some sort of training would be beneficial: (1) the sociometry of the district (or region or state); (2) interpersonal relating; and (3) group organizing and leadership. Regarding the first, we have already noted the basic configurations which must be understood; within those configurations, project directors must become adept at identifying those persons and groups whose active support is most essential. Regarding interpersonal relationships, it is clear that project directors must become skilled at relating to power figures on a one-to-one basis without being either intimidated or offensive. With respect to group leadership, project directors need to know how to organize groups of parents, community members, or educators to provide adequate linkage, support, advice, and if necessary, buffering from potentially-threatening interests; thus, specific orientation and help on the

recruitment, management, and utilization of advisory groups of various kinds is in order.

III. PROJECTS AS PROBLEM-SOLVING

A major argument behind this approach to evaluation has been a conception of Title III Projects as educational problem-solving efforts. The model which was proposed as a point of reference was that contained in Havelock's Guide to Innovation in Education[1], a six-stage model of "rational" problem solving beginning with the establishment of a relationship between change agent and client, proceeding to diagnosis of the real educational need, a search for resources relevant to solutions to that need, the building and choice among alternative solutions, the gaining of acceptance for chosen solutions through a more widespread social diffusion effort, and finally the implementation and long-term maintenance of the agreed-upon solution, leading optimally to an internal and self-renewing capacity for problem-solving on other educational problems. In adapting this model to fit the Title III situation, certain modifications are in order. One important consideration is the life-cycle of the typical project. It is never the case that the one-year funded cycle is a truly complete problem-solving cycle; in fact, it is only a part of one, indeed often a fairly small part. In other words, both relationships and needs were established long before and even search and choice among solutions took place either during or prior to the proposal-writing process. At the other end of the cycle, it is also obvious that many aspects of maintenance and self-renewal are only settled months or even years after funding has been terminated. Figure 3 might suggest this situation diagrammatically. Nine periods of time are suggested; of these only two or at the most four are conducted within the official "funded" cycle, namely T6 and T7 and possibly T8 and T9. We would prefer to argue, however, that a project does not involve just one cycle of problem solving, but at least two

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[1]Ronald G. Havelock. "The Change Agent's Guide to Innovation in Education." Educational Technology Publications, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973.

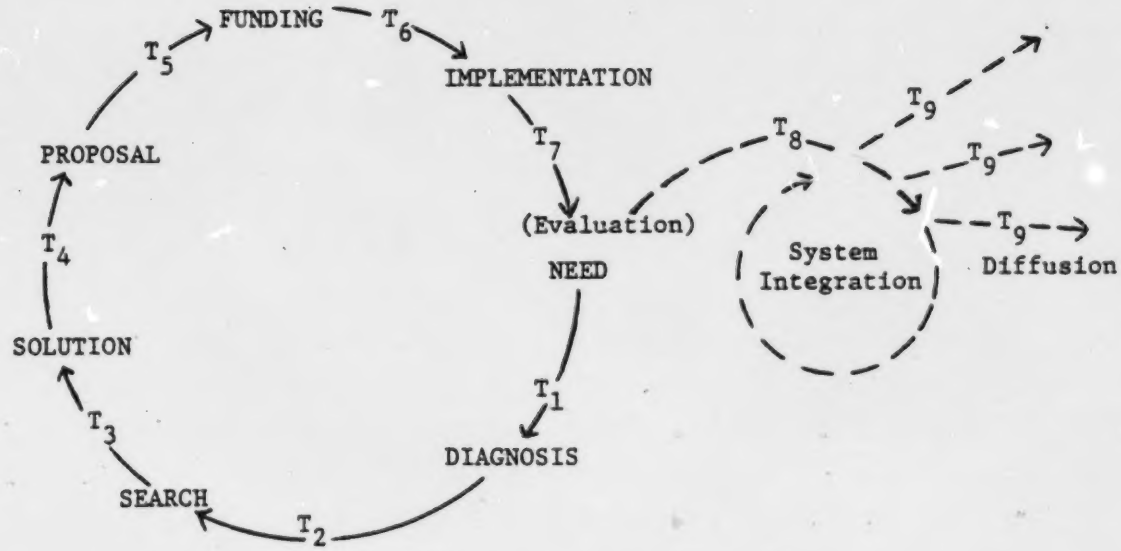

FIGURE 3: SINGLE CYCLE MODEL OF THE LIFE OF A PROJECT

and probably many more. In other words, it does not suffice to consider a need at one point in time and then forget about it or assume that it stays the same; equivalent reasoning should apply to the search and solution phases of a project. Hence, we can conceive of a pre-funding cycle and a post-funding cycle as diagrammed in Figure 4.

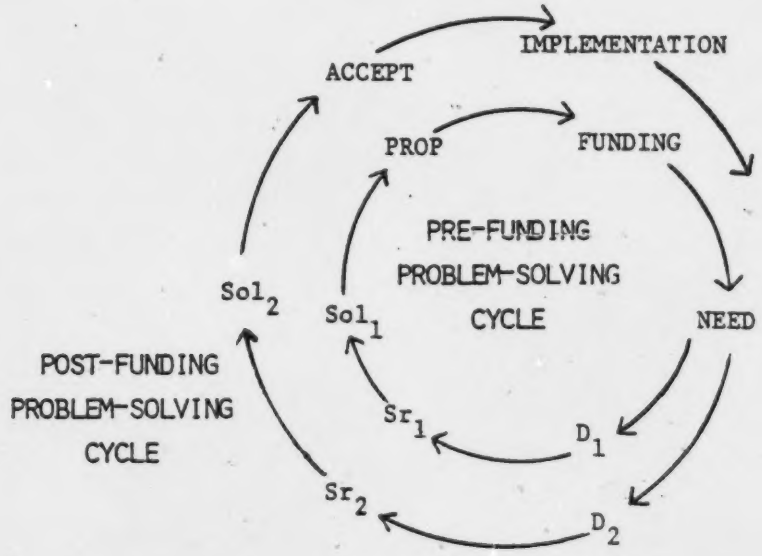

FIGURE 4: MULTIPLE CYCLE MODEL OF THE LIFE OF A PROJECT

There are at least three reasons why Figure 4 represents what should happen in a project rather than Figure 3. The first is time lag. The situation at the beginning of the funded cycle is frequently not the same as it was in the very early stages of project conception. The need may have changed, the resources available may have altered, or new solution possibilities may have emerged. Secondly, with the funding should come a greatly increased capacity to work through the problem-solving steps so that it should now be possible to do a much more thorough job of needs assessment, to search much farther and much deeper for information and ideas, and to develop, refine, and choose among solutions with far more skill and imagination. Thirdly, after the proposal is funded, we are dealing with a changed, almost always enlarged, social situation. More people are involved at more levels; it cannot therefore be assumed that what was perceived as the need or the most appropriate solution by one or two individuals writing the proposal will be perceived exactly the same way by the larger circle. If norms of participation and democratic decision making are upheld, then there is a necessity of proceeding through many of the problem-solving steps once more with the larger group. (The same logic, of course, applies with even greater force at the diffusion stage where the social circle expands enormously.)

Following the above reasoning, we asked project directors to tell us what steps they went through to assess needs and search for resources and solution alternatives, both before and after projects were funded. The findings are a bit disheartening, suggesting that the Figure 3 model is much more common than than the Figure 4 model. A number of interview questions attempted to get at perceptions of the project as a problem-solving process. The first and most obvious of these questions yielded the slimmest returns: "Do you see your project as an example of problem solving? Can you explain what you mean by this?" Almost all respondents mistook the intent of this question, answering that their projects represented solutions to the problems of this or that client group, usually students. What they missed was the notion of a process of problem solving which was implied in the question.

It seemed that the focus was very much on the solution and not the problem or the need from which the problem might have been formulated. Most project directors perceived the need as fairly obvious and the solution as something they were committed to and thoroughly convinced of the appropriateness.

A number of other questions addressed themselves to more specific aspects of problem solving. Two questions concerned diagnosis and needs assessment; two concerned financial resources; one concerned acquisition of information. products and materials; and, a set of four questions asked about the solution choosing and adaptation process.

A. *Diagnosis and Needs Assessment*

One item simply asked respondents to rate the amount of effort which went into "diagnosis and needs assessment." The results were as follows:

TABLE 7

AMOUNT OF EFFORT APPLIED TO DIAGNOSIS OR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

"None"	0
"Minimal"	4
"Reasonable Amount"	13
"Large Amount"	9
"Extremely large amount"	3
No Response	2

In most cases, the assessment referred to took place before the project was funded and in many cases, the process was described as "informal".

The more revealing question was worded as follows: "How well have you continued to assess and diagnose needs and problems?" Most of the

responses seemed to fit under "evaluation" rather than needs assessment. For example, seven mentioned student tests of one kind of another, usually referred to as "pre-tests". Five others mentioned teachers' ratings of students. Two mentioned "feedback" from students: in one case via a special form, in the other "constant". One mentioned very specific outcomes such as "the number of boats built, issues of the magazine actually published." In one case, the project revolved around very intensive diagnostic case studies of individual children with special needs. The project director in this case indicated that the assessment process could not be generalized; it had to be viewed case by case. Altogether, sixteen project directors mentioned some sort of data from or by or on students, themselves, as a major part of the diagnosis.

Data on teachers' self-assessments were cited four times, and regular meetings or visits with teachers, three times. Letter requests to parents and parent meetings were each cited once. In three cases, workshop reactions were elicited; one said that "each activity has its own instrument". One indicated that assessments were by personal visitations which were "carefully documented".

Five stated little more than that the process was "informal", one saying that the need was "obvious", another indicating that he/she spends a lot of time trying to anticipate problems.

One director perhaps stated what was implicit in some other responses, that this needs assessment step was done "just for proposals".

One project actually hired an outside consultant to come in on a weekly basis to examine how the project was going and how the project team members were relating to each other and to relevant others. This project was one of the few which claimed to have rather serious relationship difficulties.

In summary, we feel that the needs assessment process is treated generally in a very informal and perfunctory manner. Assessments are rarely used to redirect or refocus project objectives or activities in a significant way. There also seems to be a confusion between (a) needs assessment, (b) needs analysis and interpretation, (c) formative evaluation, (d) summative evaluation, and (e) student testing. We will return to some of these issues later in this report in discussing what respondents said about "evaluating benefits".

Implications

There seems to be a need for a more satisfactory orientation to the subject of needs assessment or diagnosis by potential project directors. It is noteworthy that scant mention was made of national, state, or local educational priorities and one wonders whether these have any real meaning or visibility to the average educator. There is also perhaps a dearth of appropriate tools to assess a range of needs in some way which allows meaningful options to emerge and rational choices to be made. Finally, it would appear that whatever needs assessment is made in the proposal stage stands for the entire project. It may well be that state guidelines should encourage some form of reassessment of needs prior to implementation of the project as specified in the proposal.

B. *Searching for and Acquiring Resources*

Most directors indicated that they had made an extensive search for resources, in terms of products, materials, and to a lesser extent, consultants. However, some also indicated that they needed to make no search because "I already had it in my head." We find this latter response distressing since it was fairly common and seemed to represent some lack of openness to new and different ideas and approaches.

Many projects take it upon themselves to develop their own materials, handbooks, etc., expressing dissatisfaction or lack of awareness of what presently exists.

Three projects mentioned universities or university-based consultants as resources; other human resources mentioned were a "people bank" of 25 resource linkers and private consultants. Two projects mentioned other kinds of resource centers. The State's Regional Centers and the several collaboratives did not receive explicit mention in this context. Only two projects gave explicit credit to packaged materials developed elsewhere.

We also asked directors what problems or difficulties they might have encountered in trying to get materials. In a few cases, delays were encountered because of school committee objections or simply inaction, but most indicated that there were no real problems here. In one case, the project director held a regional center responsible for a blockage. In three cases, directors indicated that they or their staff were too overextended and tied to a tight project timeline which allowed little time to expend effort in this direction. One project cited resentment in the district caused by too much innovation: "Innovation on top of innovation beyond the tolerance point."

Implications

As with needs assessment there does not appear to be a consistent or coherent strategy of information-materials search in any of these projects. In spite of the claim by many that they expend effort in this direction, there is little evidence for this from what they report. Furthermore, there is little evidence of imagination in the search process, such as it is. Almost no use seems to be made of the vast information resource represented by ERIC; collaboratives are underutilized; the State's resources are underutilized; there is little search for past Title III projects which

might have tried similar kinds of things, which might also have developed suitable materials, which might have a great deal of experience and technical know-how to pass on. This lack of outreach to a very rich resource universe should also be contrasted with the strong claims these projects make to be original and "innovative". It is doubtful that these claims to originality could be justified if more extensive searches had been undertaken; on the other hand, the quality and sophistication of projects, and furthermore, their genuine innovativeness could be enhanced by such a search. It would appear that a more thorough orientation and training would be justified in this area also, together, perhaps with more explicit encouragement by the State for such search activities after the project has been funded.

C. Consideration of Alternative Solutions

Another interview question was phrased as follows: "Have you considered or developed alternative solutions for the project objectives different from those expressed at the start of your project? -- and, if so, how did these alternatives emerge?" The typical answer was "Yes" (13 "yes", 3 "no", of those answers which were clearly codable*). On the other hand, most of these "alternatives" represented minor shifts in procedure or scope. Two projects indicated that they had shifted from an individual approach to a "systems" approach. Others indicated a shifting, expanding, or narrowing of the primary target group. One project to develop "alternative schools" found a good deal of resistance to such a global concept, and thus reoriented itself to the more modest-sounding objectives of developing a resource center and technical assistance for "non-traditional" programs.

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*Because of great length of the interview, some sections were marked as lower priority than others, meaning that if the interviewer were running short on time, he/she might pass over them to others. The reason why these items were deemed lower in priority is not their general importance for project management but the fact that we were interviewing late in the project cycle when little could be done to alter the situation based on our findings or reflections.

The sources of influence for seeking alternatives were almost always negative, e.g., resistance by a particular group of teachers, feedback from students and teachers, or mandate from the superintendent. In one case, a superintendent would not allow implementation of an alternative solution, requiring that the project stick to the original objectives in spite of what the project director viewed as clear evidence of their inappropriateness.

An additional question asked, "What process was used (if any) to adapt or test the solution chosen before implementation?" This question elicited very few responses and it seems evident that most directors feel there is no time for such testing within a one-year cycle. Those projects which represent either replications or diffusion of past successful projects are obviously in good shape on this question. For example, the Watertown Reading Resource Center was a concept already well tested by EDCO in 20 Boston schools before being tried in Watertown. Similar advantages applied in the case of the "Adventure" projects. For a few projects, initial rejection of a proposal leads to a rethinking, redevelopment and resubmission on a following year. In at least one instance (Saugus, ACT III) the result seems to have been very satisfactory. A few projects do report major redevelopment within the project cycle. In one case, the original approach met with considerable objections and resistance by students (an individualized learning program), workloads which were deemed unfairly heavy and inability or unwillingness of students to take completely self-guided actions regarding their course of study. The project director felt compelled to provide more structure and admitted: "I'm more authoritarian with the students than before. They need to be told to be here and to do the work."

We regret that we have only these few scraps of evidence to provide on the process of adaptation which has been suggested as critical by many experts in the field of innovation. Evaluations of project management in future years should explore this area more thoroughly.

IV. ADEQUACY OF FUNDS

It was a genuine surprise to find that projects were uniformly satisfied with the level of funding which they had been awarded under Title III. The question was put as follows: "To what extent are you satisfied with the financial support the project has received thus far?" The suggested alternatives with tabulated responses appear in Table 8.

TABLE 8

Adequacy of Funding	
"Not Enough"	0
"Adequate Funds"	25
"Money Left Over"	3
No codable response	3

In all three cases where it was predicted that money would be left over, the amounts were small. Only three of those who said it was adequate offered qualifiers; one would have needed more if they had not started late since they had far more participants than they thought would subscribe. A second said they succeeded only because of volunteer helpers supported under another federal program; a third simply indicated that it was "tight". We view this satisfaction with project funds with mixed feelings. On the one hand it seems to indicate great wisdom (or generosity) on the part of the state in parcelling out the funds. On the other hand, from our point of view, especially in light of the findings reported in this section, the projects would have been more truly beneficial problem-solving activities if they had invested more time, and inevitably more expense in such activities as needs assessment, resource search, careful selection of a solution from among alternatives, and adaptation and redevelopment of the solution to meet the special needs of the clients.

V. *STABILIZING THE INNOVATION: CONTINUANCE*

At the time of our interviews, the issue which was beginning to loom large for many projects was continuation into the following year. Obviously, it is a matter of great importance for the project director and his/her staff since their jobs may well be on the line. More importantly for many of them, their emotional investment in an idea and an ideal is on the line. For the federal and state people who fund such projects on a short-term basis, it is also a crucial matter to see that the investment is not plowed under when the first leaves turn. Therefore, we explored a number of aspects of project continuation plans in our interviews. The lead questions concerned funding, of course. We asked: "Do you anticipate acquiring adequate financial resources to continue the project?" and then "What kinds of activities did you employ to meet this need?" In response, three simply said "No", one indicating that they might do something later under "766"; a second that such was not necessary; and a third that continuation of the project was undesirable in its present form since it was going "downhill".

Most projects indicated that they had submitted proposals under Title IV-C, the continuation of the Title III program, and most seemed hopeful of funding via this route, although in fact the state was to fund only a handful of these projects for another round. Beyond this, many projects seemed lost. Six projects indicated that they had proposals in for various federal programs (all different!). Those cited were: the National Endowment for the Arts, U. S. Office of Education-Bureau of Education for the Handicapped; Elementary and Secondary Education Act; National Institute of Education, and the National Defense Education Act.
Of these, at least three were either assured or in hand. Private foundations were sought in at least four instances. In one of these, support is assured (in addition to support from Title IV-C) and in two others it is possible. The assured case is instructive; the project director searched a foundation directory for several who seemed like they might be interested in his kind of project, wrote off several letters explaining his needs and got vague responses of interest from three. These he pursued with vigor, receiving a further vague response from one. Continued pursuit of this only finally yielded a grant; thus, the energy and persistence of the director paid off.

Even though it is possible to extend some projects for many years on state, federal or private grants, sustained improvements in education eventually must be sustained at the local level, backed up by local tax dollars. Therefore, the most important long-term route to continuance is through the local administration, the school committee, and sometimes ultimately the electorate. It is clear that many Title III projects have rough going at this point. Theoretically, there are five ways a school committee can cope with the renewal of a project: (1) it can increase the level of effort (not an illogical proposition, given the fact that most projects are initially funded as "pilots" in some sense); (2) it can keep it going at the same level of effort; (3) it can reduce the level of effort significantly while maintaining the essential aspects; (4) it can reduce the level of effort substantially, eliminating essential aspects; or (5) it can drop support altogether. It appears, however, that only the last three of these five options are real as far as school committees are concerned; there are no instances of the first two options among our projects. Fifty percent is probably on the generous side for LEA funding relative to state-federal, and it is usually a struggle to get long-term commitment to more than one new position.

Continued financing can be a gloomy topic for innovators, but the picture need not be so dark as it is usually painted. In fact, there are several alternative ways to approach the problem and many examples emerged from our interviews. Above all, it is important for project directors to be diverse in their thinking about future funding. A frontal approach to the superintendent and the school committee is only one approach that is worth trying. Even with the frontal approach, however, it is important to proceed strategically. The relationship to the superintendent is the most crucial, followed closely by the relationship to the board. The latter relationship may evolve either directly or through the superintendent;

it is sometimes even possible to by-pass a negative or passive superintendent if solid relationships have been developed with key board members, although we do not advise such a strategy. The relationship to key power figures has to be developed in such a way that there is no premature closure on their decision making. As noted earlier, one project director who claimed to have strong support from above also said that funding through the school committee would not be proposed for next year: evidently "support" was one thing, but "priorities" was another. The true test of support is the willingness of those in authority to re-examine their priorities and, in tight budget situations, to make a choice for the new over the old. If a project has proven itself as a major contribution to the educational process in the district, it has earned the right to displace other activities that have been going longer and, therefore, should not be viewed as an "extra" or, as one respondent put it, "frosting on the cake". It is up to the project director and more importantly the state and its representatives to point out these things to the district.

With or without direct support from the district, there are many funding options which need to be explored. Among these are defining and subdividing some elements of the project which might be separately fundable in different ways or under different categories of the school budget, exploring non-cost options such as the use of idle equipment, empty or underutilized space and facilities, parent or student volunteers, community resource persons outside the schools, voluntary contributions, and fee-for-service or fee-for-product arrangements. We found some examples of each of these options in one or another project.

We were especially intrigued by some of the examples we found of what might be called "exchange economies". For example, a theatre arts project in Boston was successful enough to develop its own company which could put on productions and sell tickets to generate revenue. Two other projects were able to generate additional revenue through the sale of materials they had developed. The highly inventive "OPUS" project, only in its planning

year, has already found several ways to reduce costs (through donations and use of idle equipment, volunteers from various segments of the community etc.) and to generate small but meaningful amounts of revenue by selling the various products of its enterprises such as bumper stickers which promote agriculture in Massachusetts and, of course, its agricultural produce. This project promises not only to provide integrated academic and real life experiences of high value to students but to be self-supporting in doing so!

The general point which should be made to conclude this section is to recognize that innovative projects which provide significant benefits ought to be salable in one way or another, but project directors probably need help in exploring viable alternatives. We can see from our interviews that there are many alternatives but these alternatives are not equally perceived by all project directors.

We should not ignore the fact that there are non-financial aspects to continuance which we might put under the general heading of "institutionalization." We can identify many of these activities under the headings of: (1) training; (2) materials development; (3) facilities development or reorganization; and (4) administrative restructuring. The most commonly cited of these was training; five projects indicated that they did some special training of trainers or specially designated staff persons who could carry on the basic activities of the project, passing them on to other trainers, as a result of such training, presumably ad infinitum. Three projects indicated that they felt their development of materials which would last and could be passed on to others represented a kind of insurance that the project would have longer term impact. However, the means by which such materials would be diffused and put to good use were not well thought out. There were other instances of the development of laboratories or resource centers which have an obvious physical reality which lives on after the paid staff are gone, but in one instance the director expressed strong doubts as to whether her carefully constructed and assembled resource room could be effective without some full-time person who was responsible and trained to keep it together, keeping track of items loaned, replenishing stocks, and maintaining active awareness

among teachers.

Finally, with regard to administrative restructuring there are usually several types of options, all of which need to be worked out with key power figures, but many of which can be accomplished without obviously affecting the school budget and hence without disturbing the school committee. One step is awarding official recognition to the project as a part of the regular school program. Another is the changing of job descriptions and perhaps the awarding of newly vacant slots to members of the Title III project (there was one example which clearly fitted this pattern) and changing the title of the position. A third approach is the fusion of projects or parts of projects with existing ongoing and well-accepted services. In this latter case, of course, the project director may feel that the essential purpose of the innovation will be subverted when this is done, a sentiment expressed by at least one respondent.

VI DISSEMINATION

Title III projects can be judged successful on three grounds: first, on the direct effects; i.e., the benefits that they produce for students or others during the lifetime of the federal/state funding. Second, through their continuation and integration into the ongoing activity of schools in subsequent years, and third, through their dissemination or diffusion to other schools, other school districts across the state, and perhaps even to other states. This last measure of success is at the same time the most enticing and the most tenuous since it raises the possibility of enormous educational gains and widespread influence resulting from relatively modest initial investments. For this reason, we were eager to examine the various ways in which projects were engaging in dissemination activities. For the most part, it seemed that dissemination was not a very salient goal at the time of our interviews in comparison to issues of continuance or implementation. Nevertheless, almost all projects had engaged in some kinds of dissemination well beyond their initial target group (i.e.,

the clients designated as the primary beneficiaries of the projects' activities or services), and many had quite ambitious plans for widespread dissemination in the last stages of the project.

Almost all projects used more than one medium to get the message across, some using a great number. We counted at least 25 distinct types of media or strategies which could be classified as follows:

Personalized:

Workshops: cited by nine projects as an explicit dissemination strategy, five of these for dissemination beyond the district, four for dissemination to other schools or other populations within the district. Workshops and training events of various sorts were also mentioned in other contexts by at least 10 other projects, many of these undoubtedly resulting in fairly widespread dissemination.

Course Teaching: explicitly mentioned as a dissemination strategy by only one project but clearly an important medium for dissemination for several others.

Visitation-out: two projects indicated that they would disseminate by making personal visits to other schools, in one case inside the district, in the other outside. Another regretted that there was not enough time for such visits.

Visits-in: only one project made explicit mention of inviting outsiders in to visit, discuss, and observe what was going on. We wonder why this obvious approach was not more popular.

Demonstrations: only mentioned once explicitly. Again, this seems a bit strange. It may be (a) that most of these projects were not very demonstrable in this sense, or (b) that this particular word is out of fashion. Many of the activities that fall under the category of "workshop" might equally fit a loose definition of "demonstration".

Using collaboratives: a special opportunity in the State of Massachusetts is the presence of several voluntary educational collaboratives which criss-cross the state. Only one project made explicit mention of such a strategy, another considered it.

Building or tapping into existing networks of educators: explicitly mentioned by only two projects: one said they made use of informal teacher coffee hours (in-district dissemination), the other mentioned the Regional Centers. Again, for many others this was an implicit strategy but not articulate in response to our survey.

Consulting: one project director indicated that she was considering disseminating the process she had developed through private consulting to other districts on a fee basis.

Print Media:

Newspaper coverage: explicitly mentioned in 15 projects, this was clearly the most popular single medium for dissemination. Usually coverage was in the local community newspaper but regional newspapers were also commonly used. It was almost never difficult to get coverage, and stories and press releases were usually accepted by such papers. Cordial and even close relationships with editors or education writers were sometimes cited as well. A few projects also received coverage in the large metropolitan dailies, but in these cases the project had considerably less control over content. As noted earlier in discussing the director's role, many directors soon learn to become adept at dealing with the local press.

Newsletters-school: mentioned by three projects, obviously for intra-district dissemination.

Newsletters-educational: one project mentioned using the North Shore Collaborative's newsletter; another mentioned "professional newsletter".

Newsletter-Project: three projects cited their own newsletters as a prime dissemination vehicle; two others mentioned such a newsletter as a planned activity.

Journal articles: three mentions.

Non-Print Media:

Radio: used by one, planned by another; indirect evidence suggests, however, that several other projects received minor publicity from this medium (see below).

Television: cited by five projects; two commerical, one educational, one cable, one closed-circuit.

Print Materials:

Packages-kits: three developing, one planning.

Handbooks-manuals: five mentions; and implicit for several others.

Brochures-pamphlets: five developed, one planned; presumably several others had developed brochures but did not report them in terms of a dissemination strategy.

Reports: actually mentioned by only one project as part of their dissemination plan.

Bumper stickers: as noted earlier, one project generated some revenue through the sale of bumper stickers which promoted agriculture in Massachusetts ("Support Mass. Growers"). At the same time, in smaller print, the stickers advertised the project.

Non-Print Materials:

Slide-tape presentations: mentioned by four projects.

Videotapes: three mentions.

Film: one mention.

Photo essay: one mention.

Other Dissemination Strategies:

Exchange with other projects: two mentions.

Expansion: one mention.

"I may just take the whole show elsewhere": one mention.

The above listing is impressive in its variety, but the explicit mentions are probably gross underestimates of actual use in most cases. At least this is the impression which we got from group discussions of dissemination which were held at workshop meetings in April. Nearly all participants in these groups indicated use of local newspapers on several occasions, and about half noted some experience with either radio or television. What we are most concerned about, however, is the absence of any coherent and deliberately-planned strategy of diffusion in nearly all the projects. Little thought was given to the kinds of audiences that should be targeted, the use of opinion leaders, and the use of several media in concert to produce synergistic effects. We feel that it would be worthwhile providing orientation sessions and training in the use of various media, the development of dissemination materials, and, above all, the design and implementation of overall dissemination strategies. The few group discussions which were held did reveal a considerable amount of sophistication by some directors and a lot of wisdom worth sharing. For

example, the following points came out of a brief exchange on TV coverage: "You have to pressure them." "You need to give them a 'news' angle: What is the story? When is it going to happen?" One project urged four of its students at different times to make presentations on Boston's Channel 4 Speak-Out program. All four were accepted with a resulting deluge of calls for more information. The discussion went on to raise points about how to handle radio coverage, the use of awards as publicizing "events," distortion effects that can come from miscommunication with reporters and so forth. We only regret that (a) there were not more opportunities for such discussions, and that (b) we were not able to capture more of the experience for inclusion in this report. Clearly, also, more probing and extended interview questions on the dissemination experience of different projects should be undertaken in subsequent years.

VII. EVALUATION

The last question in the interview asked "How are you evaluating the benefits or outcomes of the project?" In response, we found a variety of procedures followed as summarized in Table 9.

TABLE 9

PROCEDURES USED FOR PROJECT EVALUATION

Procedures	Respondents	No. of Projects
Questionnaires		12
	Teachers	(8)
	Students	(4)
	Administrators	(2)
	Parents	(1)
Interviews		6
	Teachers	(3)
	Students	(2)
	Administrators	(2)
	Parents	(1)
Tests		6
	Teachers	(1)
	Students	(6)
Feedback		4
	Teachers	(3)
	Parents	(2)
Counts (e.g. number participating)		3
Observations (e.g. classroom)		2
Written Evaluations (by teachers)		2
"Subjective" (by project director in one case; by parents in another)		2
Records		1
Documentation		1
"Informal"		1
None (Not relevant; needs to be at it longer)		1
Uncodable-No response		6

Two clarifications need to be made regarding this table. First, most of those not responding to this question had covered the topic of evaluation in discussing the earlier question on needs assessment. As noted in that section, many of the responses such as "pre and post tests" seemed to fit better under evaluation. Secondly, since many projects mentioned more than one type of respondent and more than one type of procedure, the totals in the table overlap considerably.

It is fair to say that evaluation was not a very salient aspect of most projects and very few were thought of or designed as "experiments." No mention was made of "control groups," "sampling," "randomization," "hypothesis testing" or any of various possible statistical tests or analyses. Undoubtedly, such matters would have come up from various projects in more extensive probing; the point is that they were not mentioned spontaneously.

Perceptions of the "Success" of the Project

We did not feel that it was possible to collect quantitative data from projects on their degree of success in any way that could be meaningfully compared, grouped, or summated, but we did ask each director a subjective question near the beginning of the interview which probably tells us something about the overall impact of the Title III Program. The question was simply: "How is your project going at this point?" Responses can be grouped in Table 10.

TABLE 10

HOW THE PROJECT IS "GOING" AT THE TIME OF THE INTERVIEW

Unqualified success	7
Very well; some problems	8
OK-no problems	5
OK-some problems	6
Struggling-not OK	1
Failing	2

Some examples from each group might add meaning to these numbers:

Unqualified success:

"Proposal well-conceived; project follows it closely. Really good feedback, high workshop attendance; nothing but praise for materials and lots of teachers use materials without telling us."

"Fabulous! Thirty people have attended the 15 planned sessions regularly."

"Excellent. Positive feedback from teachers and students; the program is accepted and is effective. The community is supportive. All activities went off without problems."

Very well-some problems:

"It works! We have the endurance to put up with bureaucracy; we don't quite fit in. The best part is that we have merged school and community."

"Absolutely great--nothing but positive feedback. Teachers really excited over workshop. Principals very supportive. Problems of proximity, not enough materials, funding for next year."

"Very successful project but Regional Centers aren't promoting it; it needs state support."

OK-no problems:

"Appeals directly to special interest groups. Because it is on a volunteer basis, there is commitment."

"Stayed close to the project as written."

"Good progress."

OK-some problems:

"Basically pleased. We came with a different concept of school; there was resistance and confusion which led to redesign and clarification by us. Now the teachers are saying, 'we're beginning to see what they're about'."

"Very successful in providing service and in getting people to work with us but unsuccessful in getting the system to pick it up."

Struggling:

"Too much for one year; participants felt no support, overload. Program is seen (by administration) as a panacea and is supported without any knowledge."

Failing:

"Ill-conceived; principal is very conservative; chairs everything and everybody."

"Downhill! Breakdown of communication. Regular teachers resent involvement in 'special ed'; difficult teacher union negotiations; confused perception of objectives by all groups."

These quotes should give a good flavor of the types and range of responses received. They do not, however, represent a true evaluation of what was going on. In some cases, our own judgments would be more harsh, based on what was said subsequently, in some cases more lenient. Nevertheless, our overall impression of the Title III program as a whole for 1975-76 was that it was remarkably successful in providing the stimulus for change in a wide variety of ways in a wide variety of situations. The precise measurement of the benefits probably has to be done on a project-by-project basis and many projects will yield data of this sort. We would guess, however, that many of the evaluations will underestimate true impact. As one director noted, many use and benefit without reporting back, and much of the benefit in terms of improved atmosphere, attitudes toward school by students and parents, increased options for learning, and so forth will go completely unmeasured, either because they are "intangible" and unmeasurable or simply because they were not part of the evaluation design; i.e., not intended or stated objectives.

Our evaluation through these interviews does highlight one important fact: very diverse projects with diverse objectives do have a lot of things in common when it comes to the management of innovation. They all experienced very similar challenges in building relationships, assessing needs, searching for and implementing solutions, and evaluating outcomes. Particularly when it came to continuance and dissemination, they experienced very similar kinds of difficulties. We hope, therefore, that future evaluations will again focus on the project management process and provide some formative evaluation data as well as orientation and training and experience-sharing sessions for those who are engaged in this important enterprise.

APPENDIX

EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

MERRIMACK EDUCATION CENTER

TITLE III ESEA EVALUATION

Interview Questionnaire

The purpose of this interview is to get your (Project Director) views on how the project is going up to now and perhaps to explore aspects of project management which you feel might be improved in the short time remaining between now and June.

There are three objectives to these field visits we are making now. The first, and perhaps most important, is to determine ways in which we might help out with the concluding phases of the project, especially with issues of long-term maintenance and dissemination. Secondly, we want to get some information from each of the projects which we can use later in the workshop sessions we have remaining. The third is to collect information for the State on the problems and progress of this last year of Title III which will help the Title III staff do a better job next year.

Do you have any questions at this point before we begin?

1. Would you describe your project to me?

2. How is your project going at this point? (Interviewer will need to ask leading questions to move response from yes/no)

3.a)Who are the people that your project serves directly?

3.b)Are there others who also receive benefits? Who are they and what benefits do they receive?

4. Given the choices on this card, how would you describe your project?

   a) ____ It is a very new and unique concept as far as you know.

   b) ____ It is new at least as far as your region or district is concerned.

   c) ____ It is new at least for the particular client group you are working with.

   d) ____ It is not really innovative at all.

5. If you consider your project innovative, will you explain what you view as the most innovative aspects? (After the initial response ask--Can you think of any other innovative aspects of your project?)

6. Do you see your project as an example of problem solving? Can you explain what you mean by this?

7.a)How would you define your role in the project?

7.b)What percentage of your total time is spent on project duties?

7.c)What sort of work do you perform in addition to this project?

8. There are a number of different terms that various people use to describe the roles they fill on Title III projects, and usually someone defined formally as the "director" fills many of these roles simultaneously or consecutively. I would like to give you a list of the roles and ask you to make a rough guess as to the percentage of your total project time you devote to each of them. (only roles you feel you spend time in)

[Provide interviewee the following list of roles:]

a) What percentage of your time is spent on the following roles: (Note: Do not need to add up to 100%)

____a) manager/administrator of the project

____b) key decision-maker

____c) researcher

____d) trainer-teacher

____e) disseminator

____f) catalyst (someone who incites others to action and to articulate their needs)

____g) consultant (helping others to help themselves)

____h) solution provider (offering explanation and solutions)

____i) solution adapter (someone who takes innovations or innovative ideas developed elsewhere and reshapes them in some way to fit the local scene)

____j) solution implementer

____k) resource linker (ask respondent to indicate what resources he is thinking of)

b) (After examining the percentages of time spent on various roles, ask the project director to give a brief description of what is meant by each of the roles that take up the largest percentage of his/her time)

[Note: If project director spends less then 50% of his/her time on project, then have two people present, i.e., the one who is doing the work.]

9. Timespan and Timeline of Project Stages

We would now like to get some perspective on the major steps or stages in this project, simply from the point of view of when they happened and how long they lasted. In responding here, I would like you to think not just of the activities as specified in your proposal but to look at the project in the larger sense which probably started much further back and will extend into the future, perhaps well beyond this summer. I am going to provide you a chart with 12 possible stages that might have taken place. If you cannot pinpoint or identify some of these for your project, that is quite understandable. Otherwise, try to give a date roughly to the nearest month if possible.

(Refer to Timeline of Project Stages)

10. Have you been able to build relationships with people in key positions? (Those who authorize, unlock doors to funds, clients, etc.?)

a) Who are they?

b) What kind of effort was needed to acquire these relationships?

c) How do you maintain these relationships?

d) Are there any current problems in areas where the relationships could be improved? [If yes, then probe for barriers.]

11. How well have you continued to assess and diagnose needs and problems? Can you explain your answer further?

12. How much effort has gone into assessment and diagnosis? (Use card)

____ none
____ minimal
____ reasonable amount
____ large amount
____ extremely large amount

13. To what extent are you satisfied with the financial support the project has received thus far? (use card)

____money left over (how much?)

____adequate funds

____not enough (how much more would you need to adequately complete your objective?)

14. Do you anticipate acquiring adequate financial resources to continue the project? What kinds of activities did you employ (or contemplate) to meet the need of adequate funding?

15.a)What is the amount of effort and degree of success so far in searching for and acquiring information and/or products and materials for the project? (give card)

15.b)Can you explain including types of activities, problems and difficulties encountered?

16.a)Have you considered or developed alternative solutions for project objectives different from those expressed at the start of your project?

16.b)If so, how did the alternatives emerge?

16.c)Have any new alternatives emerged since the project was funded?

16.d)What process was used (if any) to adapt or test the solution chosen before implementation?

17.a)Do you have plans for diffusion of this project or its findings?

17.b)What activities are contemplated?

17.c)How will they be supported?

18.a)Have specific steps been taken to insure the continuance of the project after July? What are they?

18.b) Have steps been taken to insure the durability of the accomplishments of the project after July? What are they?

19. How are you evaluating the benefits (outcomes) of the project? [What criteria? Qualitative or quantitative means? Can you provide this to us?]

20. Can you think of any questions we should have asked but didn't?

[redacted] PROJECT [redacted]

	Not Sure	1973 or earlier	1974	1975 Jan. Feb.	1975 Mar. Apr.	1975 May June	1975 July Aug.	1975 Sept. Oct.	1975 Nov. Dec.	1976 Projected..... Jan. Feb.	1976 Mar. Apr.	1976 May June	1976 July or later
A. When did the basic ideas behind the project originate?													
B. When did the project originate?													
C. When did you first establish relationships with key persons?													
D. When did you establish relationships with the direct clients of the project, with people in key power positions with respect to the project, those who authorize, who unlock the doors to funds, resources, clients, etc.?													
E. When did you establish relationships with the indirect clients of the project?													
F. When did you become aware of the problem described in your project?													
G. When did you complete the initial needs assessment?													
H. When did you begin the reassessment or ongoing need definition?													
I. When were objectives first established?													
J. Have your objectives been altered? If so, when?													
K. When were you notified of official approval of project funding?													
L. When did you initiate a resource search? When did you seek out resources?													
M. When did you actually begin implementation of your project?													
N. Have you conducted diffusion activites? If so, when did you begin?													
O. When were outcomes of the project evaluated or benefits assessed in any formal sense?													